

# CELEBRATING 75 YEARS!

# REACHING OUT, TOUCHING LIVES!

**Editor's note:** Bonnie C. Kuester, 65, has been director of the Greensboro Parks & Recreation Department since 1992.

Kuester, the department's fourth director in its 75-year history, began her 41st year in September 2008. The following is from a recent question-and-answer session with Kuester.

By NICHOLAS BROWN  
Special to the News & Record

**Q:** What is your operating philosophy, including implementing the department's primary objectives?

**A:** "We want to provide as many different kinds of leisure experiences as we can for our citizens, oftentimes at no cost. When we do charge, it's at a reasonable cost, so citizens have the ability financially to participate in all kinds of activities."

"We have several parks where an entire group or family can do a lot of different things; these are large, regional parks that have either tennis courts or a pool, a recreation center and picnic shelters."

**Q:** The department also oper-

## Q&A

with **Bonnie C. Kuester**  
Parks & Recreation Director

ates a multifaceted arts program. Why are these programs important?

**A:** "The arts are important to a lot of people. I think it obviously enhances our community's cultural aspects. Not everybody wants to play baseball. For many years, core programs were what you thought of as parks and recreation."

"When I started with the Parks & Recreation Department, everybody assumed I played sports and ran a playground. I never did any of that, except in some special areas I worked in. I started in programs for talented children."

"The arts bring a special opportunity to the community, an educational experience. It's a growth experience and an emotional experience. It's a way to express yourself."

**Q:** What would you say have been the department's major developments?

**A:** "I think one of the key developments in terms of our use of public lands in Greensboro is that we think of Greensboro as being green. I think that is so important. Greensboro is very, very interested in making sure it has a lot of green space."

"I've traveled right much in this country and so many communities just don't have that greenness. When you're away from it and then you get back to it, you understand how important it is; just aesthetically and of course, environmentally, it does so much for us."

**Q:** So, the department has been able to get the land to preserve for future use?

**A:** "Philanthropically speaking, we've been generously rewarded by families over the years. The Lindley family for Lindley Park, the Latham family for Latham Park, the Bryan family for Bryan Park, for example. There have been so many families in this community who have

## THE DIRECTORS



Daniel R. Neal



Oka T. Hester



Roger K. Brown



Bonnie C. Kuester

### Daniel R. Neal

**Years in office:** 1934-1943

#### Major accomplishments:

Country Park opened July 4, 1934; Nocho Park completed in 1937 with hiking trails, picnic spots, Windsor Community Center, bathhouse, swimming pool, tennis court and playground; Gillespie Golf Course (a 9-hole facility) completed in 1941

### Oka T. Hester

**Years in office:** 1943-1977

#### Major accomplishments:

In 1951, first Parks & Recreation Master Plan developed and first bond passed; City Beautiful formed in 1961; Greensboro Youth Council established in 1962; Music and the Visual & Performing Arts programs founded in 1970; Bryan Park opened in 1974

### Roger K. Brown

**Years in office:** 1977-1992

#### Major accomplishments:

Department won National Gold Medals in 1979 and 1987; took over operations of Lake Higgins, Lake Brandt and Lake Townsend; Tannenbaum Historic Park opened in 1988 and Barber Park opened in 1989

### Bonnie C. Kuester

**Current director:** 1992-present

#### Major accomplishments:

In 1997, 20-year Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Master Plan developed; recreation bonds passed in 2000, 2006 and 2008; department received third National Gold Medal in 2002; department nationally accredited in 2006

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## A BIG {FAT} THANKS!

THANK YOU TO THE GREENSBORO PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
AND ALL THE GREAT EVENTS THEY ACCOMMODATE US WITH:

- Sizzler Mountain Bike Race (Bur-Mil Park)
- Carolina Cup Road race (Country Park)
- Winter Series Grand Finale Cyclocross Race (Bur-Mil Park in Jan)
- Thank you for the fabulous mountain biking trail system

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OF NORTH CAROLINA  
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1-800-632-1400



Stonegate Crossing Community Playground Built in Partnership with  
Children's Home Society of NC, Home Depot Stores, Joe Gibbs Racing,  
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Greensboro, and KaBOOM! in October 2006